

PLEASE KEEP



ALLOTMENT &

# Garden Guide

VOL. 1 No. 7

JULY - 1945

*"The summer looks out from her brazen tower,  
Through the flashing bars of July."*

Well, given that kind of July weather—though with our climate we can never be sure—we shall feel like taking a snooze in the deck chair or lying down under a tree, instead of getting on with those gardening jobs that must be done. But we must not make the mistake of thinking that this month the garden can be left to take care of itself. For the weeds grow as well as the vegetables, and pests and diseases can quickly spread, if not checked at the start. So even if you feel like "just a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep," don't indulge that feeling too often, and do keep that hoe going, to



check the weeds. And watch out for those pests.



For instance, the "Cabbage White" butterfly is now on the

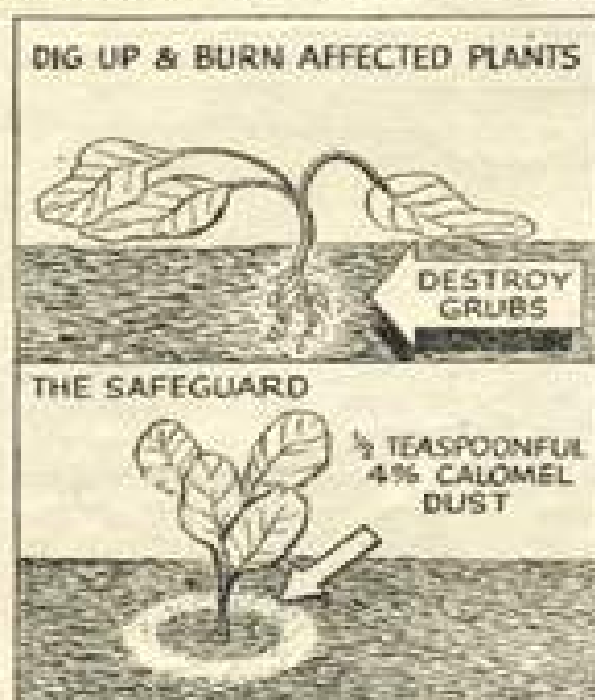
wing; too soon its caterpillars may be gorging on your green-stuff. Your first method of attacking these garden enemies is to destroy the colonies of eggs by crushing them between thumb and forefinger. It's not a pleasant job but it must be done. Then, if the caterpillars do appear, destroy them by hand-picking, or dust or spray with derris (see April Guide).



Some people complain that they have tried derris dust with little or no effect. Well, either the dust was too old and had lost its killing property, or only one

dusting was given. As successive broods of caterpillars hatch out, further dustings are necessary; fresh derris applied *as soon as caterpillars are seen* will help to control them. A dusting machine is a great convenience and the dust should be applied when there is dew on the leaves. Always try to get the dust right into the centre of the plants.

It is infuriating to go out one evening and find your cabbage plants suddenly wilting one by one. On digging up one of them you will probably find white grubs feeding on the roots. They are



the grubs of the *cabbage root fly*; once the plant is attacked the only thing to do is to dig it out and burn it. The right thing to do is to apply a ring ( $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoonful) of 4 per cent. Calomel dust round each young plant of the cabbage family as you plant it out. This will put paid to the trouble.

The *Turnip Flea Beetle* may also be on the warpath, eating holes in your cabbage and turnip plants. It has caused gardeners trouble for centuries and is most troublesome during dry weather. Some old hands believe in the cold water cure, and give the plants a good soaking every night until they are about 6 in. high. But that's not possible on some allotments, so derris, nicotine or naphthalene dust should be used, as recommended in the April Guide. And dust often till the leaves are well formed.

And don't forget that what you do—or fail to do—this month, will determine how well or badly off your family will be for winter greens in the lean period from next February onwards (see page 6).

Now having made up our minds to keep going at the job, let's have a look at some of the things we might do about our growing crops, before we get on to further sowings and plantings.

## ***Crops that need water***

We shall probably need to be economical again this summer. It is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules about watering vegetables, and the gardener must use his own judgment. Newly transplanted seedlings may suffer seriously if water is withheld. But established plants may suffer if watered only at irregular intervals. Once you

start watering you must carry on, so if the plants are holding their own in a dry spell, it is unwise to begin widespread watering unless you can do it regularly.

Assuming the water supply situation is reasonably good, crops that specially benefit by watering are runner beans, celery, marrows (specially on mounds) and tomatoes.

## ***Planting out LEEKS***

You can plant leeks from mid-June to mid-August, but July is the time recommended in the Ministry's cropping plan. Many gardeners plant them on ground cleared of peas. If you have sown leeks in your seedbed, the seedlings should be lifted when about 6 in. high. If the soil is dry, soak the seedbed before lifting. Lift carefully with a fork; it is usual to cut off the tips of the leaves before

planting out. Plant in rows 12 to 18 in. apart, 9 in. between plants. Drop each plant into a hole at least 6 in. deep, made with a blunt dibber. Water in to wash soil round the roots, but don't fill the hole with soil. The sketches show how to plant. Although hardy, the soil should be drawn up to crops in the autumn to give some protection from severe frost and to help in bleaching.



## ***Feed your ONIONS***

Early July is the best time to provide some extra rations for onions that have not had the advantage of heavy manuring before sowing or planting. A good general fertiliser such as "National Growmore" is safe and effective. The ideal time to apply any fertiliser is during showery weather; and if showers are lacking, do not fail to hoe in the fertiliser and water thoroughly. Artificial manures of all sorts are more of a danger than a help when spread on dry ground, but their action is very soon seen when rain descends or when artificial watering has been well done. Not more than two appli-

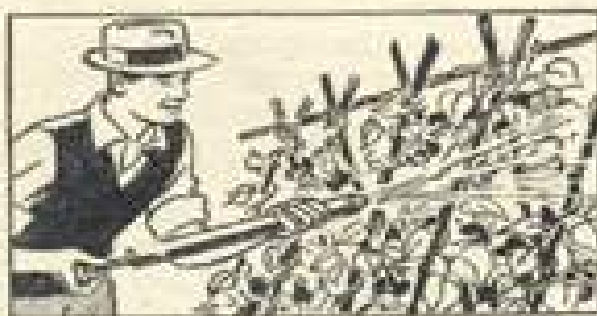
cations of any fertiliser should be given to the onion bed. The ideal to aim at is hard, well-ripened bulbs—not mere size, for the medium bulbs will keep better than the big ones. Late manuring with artificials only prolongs the growing period and makes ripening all the later and more difficult, so give no artificials after mid-July.

## ***Earthing up BRUSSELS***

Draw a little soil up round the stems about a week after planting. Remember, Brussels sprouts like very firm ground.

## **Getting 'RUNNERS' to set**

Syringe the plants, and particularly the flowers, with water during hot weather to encourage the beans to form. And pinch out the growing tips of the main shoots when the plants have reached the tops of the sticks.



## **Harvesting SHALLOTS**

Shallots are ready for harvesting when the foliage has begun to wither. You then lift the little bunches of bulbs and leave them on the surface to dry off. But if the ground is heavy and moist, lay them out along a dry surface, such as a path, for a few days, for they must be well ripened and perfectly dry before storing. Or if you have got a strip of wire netting, you could dry them on this, raising it slightly from the ground to let a current of air pass beneath them. Then tie them into bundles or lay them in trays or boxes, and store in a dry, frost-proof, airy shed. Look them over from time to time and throw out any decaying bulbs.



## **Try a row of SPINACH BEET**

If you have not sown a row of spinach beet or seakale beet earlier, try a row now. Either is a valuable vegetable and often survives the winter better than

any other green crop. Sow the seeds in drills about 1 in. deep and allow 8 in. between plants. Always use spinach beet when the leaves are young and tender.

## **Sow those TURNIPS**

If you are following the Ministry's cropping plan, now is the time to sow turnips for storing on ground cleared of early potatoes, which should be in good condi-

tion for roots, as it will have been well worked during the past month or two. The rows should be 1 ft. apart and the seed sown about 1 in. deep.

## ***Sow for succession***

Sow lettuce every 10 or 14 days. And while you are about it, don't forget to make another sowing of *parsley*, for the experts tell us we

don't eat nearly enough for our health's sake. Drills should be  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. deep.

## ***Sowing SPRING CABBAGE***

Of all early vegetables we look forward with most pleasure, perhaps, to our first cutting of spring cabbage. There is a delicacy, texture and flavour about it that no cabbage can aspire to at any other period of the year. At the end of the month sow the seeds.

Instead of sowing in a drill, try for once sowing broadcast on a small plot. Some people think you get far better plants that way. The seeds are sometimes sown far too thickly in drills and very poor plants result.

## ***Don't waste that SUMMER WASTE***

At this time of year garden "waste" is generally fairly plentiful and should not be wasted. Pea stems, potato haulms, outside lettuce leaves, the last of the rough leaves from spring cabbage, grass cuttings and the like should be made into compost, which, later on, you will dig back into your soil to maintain its fertility. How to make a compost heap was described in the March Guide.

There are some people who seem to think that the compost heap is a new idea, introduced because farmyard manure is hard to come by. It is no novelty, for the gardening books of a century or more ago mentioned it; long before it was called "compost" the value of decayed vegetable refuse was well known and understood, particularly by the professional gardener.

## ***CARROTS***

If you would like to experiment with carrots, try sowing the seed broadcast in a broad flat drill 1 in. deep, instead of in the usual

narrow drill. Late-sown carrots usually escape the attention of the carrot fly.

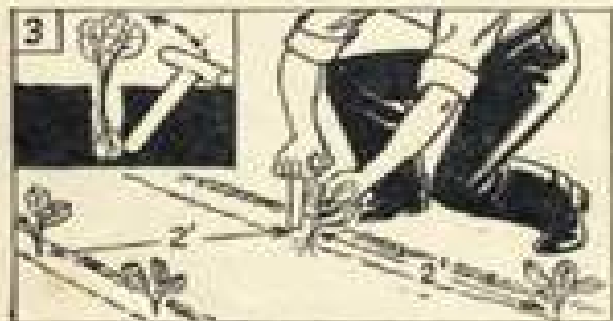
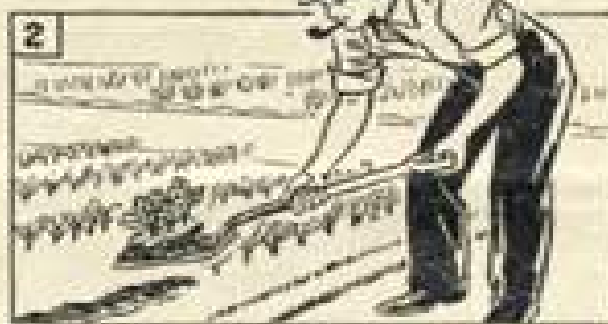
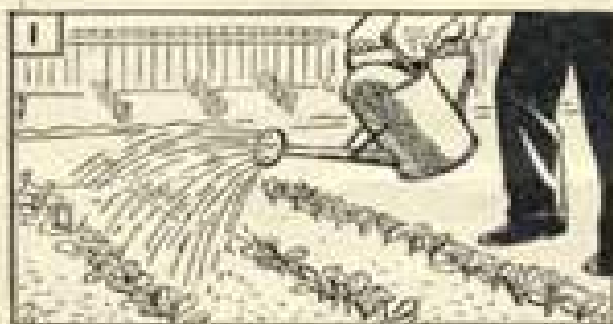
## Those **GREEN CROPS** for next winter

During the summer, when the weather does not always provide those rainy periods at the time we need them most, we gardeners have to be swift to act and seize the right moment to do our various jobs of sowing and planting. When a fall of rain has brought the surface soil into just the right state for planting, all other garden work should be set aside to make the most of an opportunity that may not come again until the seedling plants have passed the best stage for planting out. If nature fails to oblige, then we have to choose between waiting for rain and risking the plants remaining in the seed-beds, or watering the ground thoroughly before planting. With kale and sprouting broccoli, two very useful vegetables for after Christmas, this is a decision we often have to make. The middle of the month is the time to plant them, in rows

2 ft. apart each way ; if there is sufficient room, allow 2 ft. 6 in. each way. The Ministry's plan for a 300 sq. yd. plot recommends two rows of each, which should provide a good supply of green-stuff lasting well into next spring.

These brassicas should be planted in a shallow drill about 2 in. deep and 3 or 4 in. wide. This not only helps to direct moisture towards the roots of the plants, but it makes it easier to draw soil up to the stems, thus helping to keep the plants from blowing over on gusty days later in the season.

The Ministry's plan also provides for three rows of *winter cabbages*, and mid-July is the time for planting them out (2 ft. apart each way) in the shallow drills already described. If you have grown your own plants in a seed-bed, lift them carefully with a



fork, aiming at getting them out with as much soil as possible adhering to the roots. Should the weather be dry, give the seed-bed a good soaking the night before you lift. This applies to all your brassicas.

The sketches on planting cabbage may help you. If you have to plant in dry ground, water each hole before planting, cover in with soil and again water. Half-a-pint of water should be sufficient for each plant.

Always make sure that your cabbage plants are firmly planted by testing one or two here and there as you go along the rows.

If you pull the plant by the edge of a leaf, the part between your finger and thumb should tear away. But if you pull the plant up, you are not planting firmly enough.

Early-sown savoys will be reaching the stage when they should be transplanted. But it is not wise to have this crop in bearing too early in the winter, and if the larger plants are put out 2 ft. apart this month, the smaller seedlings could be transplanted 6 in. apart in an odd corner and allowed to grow on for a time before you finally put them in their permanent quarters, perhaps as late as the end of July or early in August.

## ***On saving your own SEED***

Some gardeners like having a shot at something new — seed saving, for example. Those who have not hitherto experimented in this direction might like to try it out. But it is well that they should know that while a few kinds of vegetable seeds can safely be saved by the amateur, others are best left to the experts.

You know that all flowering plants need pollen to fertilise the female part of the plant, so that it can produce seed. Some plants are fertilised by their own pollen, while others have to get it from another plant. Broadly, those that fertilise themselves are "safe"; those that need pollen from another plant should be left to the professional seed grower. Why? Well, you may be growing, say, a cabbage for seed in your garden, while another gardener not far away may be growing a Brussels sprout plant for seed. The wind or the bees may bring pollen from your neighbour's plant to your own—and your plants next year

would be an unbelievable mixture, yet would be useless to you. Now, if that were to happen in your garden, how much more serious would it be if you were to allow one of your cabbages to flower and produce seed near a commercial grower's field of Brussels sprouts growing for seed. It might cause immense trouble and ruin the quality of his seed. The only "safe" vegetables for seed-saving purposes are peas, beans of all kinds, onions, leeks, tomatoes, lettuce, ridge cucumbers and marrows.

Now is the time to mark the plants you intend to save. The best and easiest way is to tie a label on part of your rows of peas and beans and leave *all* the pods on the plants in that section for seed. Don't pick any at all for the kitchen. So often gardeners leave the last few pods on their plants. These are usually small, weakly pods and do not give really good seed. If you remember that one-tenth of your pea and bean crop

should give you sufficient seed to sow a similar area again next year, you will be able to judge how many plants to leave. Most allotment



rows are 30 ft. long, so of your peas you would need to have 3 ft. at one end of the row. Runner beans are usually a little more prolific, so one-twentieth of each row is usually enough to save for next year's sowing.

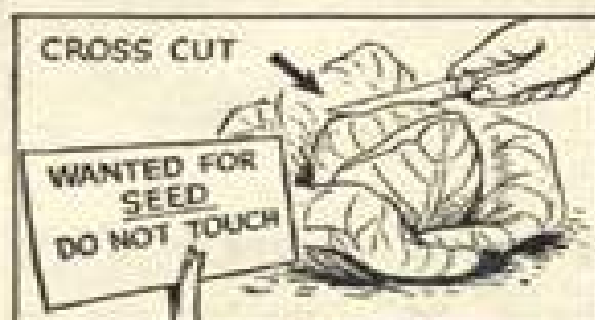
One good lettuce plant should give you all the seed you will need. Mark and label the best plant you have. Don't choose one that has "bolted" or run to seed instead of making a good large heart. It may produce offspring that will do the same thing next year and then you would get very few lettuces worth cutting. If the heart is very hard and firm, make a cut with a knife in the shape of a cross on the heart. Don't cut too deeply, but just through the first three or four layers of leaves. This will make it easy for the flower head to push its way up. That is all you need to do for the present.

If you spring planted any of last season's onions and left leeks in the ground for seed, they will be coming into flower now. See that the stems, which are very brittle, are tied securely to stakes, but

otherwise there is nothing to do to them until the end of September, for onions, and/or mid-October, for leeks. A later Guide will tell you how to harvest the seed.

When your marrows are bearing fruits, pick out one good-sized fruit and scratch the word "seed" on it with a pencil. When your tomatoes are carrying good trusses of fruits, pick out a good, shapely truss, mark it with a piece of raffia and watch this Guide for further advice.

The plants that you have selected for seed saving should be



inspected carefully to see that they do not develop disease in any way. Leave the pods or fruits to ripen as long as possible. But with lettuces, as soon as you see little tufts of fluff forming on the seed heads, pick them and put them in a shallow cardboard box or a seed-box with a sheet of paper on the bottom. You may have to look at your lettuce plant every day when it is nearing the ripening stage, as a sudden heavy down-pour of rain may wash all the seeds on to the ground, if they have reached the fluffy stage. In rainy periods it is best to pull the lettuce plant up, when nearing the harvest stage; put it in a newspaper and finish the ripening in a warm room.